

SCHOOL-BASED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SCREENINGS INITIATIVE

Background Information

In January 2014, Attorney General Jack Conway announced legal settlements with two pharmaceutical companies totaling \$32 million. The funds will be used to expand substance use treatment throughout Commonwealth, including \$1 million for the **Division of Behavioral Health (DBH)** to implement a school-based substance use screening tool in collaboration with the **Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)** to intervene with at-risk youth before they enter judicial or social services systems.



Upon announcement of the settlements, First Lady Jane Beshear affirmed her commitment to ensuring that youth at risk of substance use challenges are identified earlier and provided intervention and/or treatment. Secretary of Health & Family Services, Audrey Tayse Haynes, and KDE Commissioner, Dr. Terry Holliday envision that all middle and high school- age youth be screened for behavioral health challenges. These efforts have provided the context for identifying schools throughout the state to participate in a demonstration project related to implementing school-based behavioral health screenings.

Screening to identify students at risk for school failure or psychological or behavioral problems is increasingly recognized as an important professional practice. Both the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education and the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act have strongly endorsed this approach.

Burns & Hoagwood, 202; Glover & Albers, 2007; Levitt, Saka, et al., 2007).

So often, mental health and substance use (which combined, make up the term "behavioral health") issues often present in the classroom as poor academic performance, tardiness, absenteeism, and other disruptive behavior. We know that educators have full plates, and might feel they lack the resources to know how to help students who display this type of behavior. However, when we work together to identify the root causes of a student's behavioral health issues, we can help them get the support they need, in or outside the classroom, so that they may become better students who are college and career ready; screenings can help make this happen.

Demonstration Project

To ensure successful implementation of school-based behavioral health screenings, a workgroup of DBH and KDE representatives has identified your district to participate in a demonstration project to begin immediately. ***Funding for the components of this project is pending approval by the Substance Abuse Treatment Advisory Committee.***

Participant Benefits

1. Training on the following:
 - How to identify behavioral health needs of your students (online, approximately 1 hour)
 - Training on administering a behavioral health screening tool (online, approximately 1 hour)
2. Technical assistance with the following:
 - Developing relationships with local behavioral health providers
 - Developing a resource directory
 - Connecting with existing behavioral health initiatives
3. Outreach and educational materials about the following:
 - Behavioral health in adolescents
 - Demonstration project information
4. Ongoing access to a web-based behavioral health screening tool (beyond the end of the demonstration project)

Participant Expectations

District-Level

1. Identify one district-level point of contact (e.g., DPP) who will be responsible for overseeing web-based screening tool access and usage
2. Identify at least three schools from the district to participate (at a minimum, one high school, one middle school, and one other [alternative, combined, etc.] school)
3. Complete user-agreements for web-based screening tool
4. Participate in state and local implementation team meetings (e.g., conference calls, in-person, etc.)
5. Share information and feedback with DBH and KDE staff
6. Participate in evaluation of the demonstration project

School-Level

1. Identify 2-3 school staff in each participating school (e.g., YSC Coordinator, school nurse, guidance counselor, etc.) that will
 - Serve as the school's "preferred" behavioral health screener
 - Complete online training(s) on recommended screening tool
 - Enter data into web-based screening tool database
 - Administer screening tool
 - Make referrals to participating behavioral health providers
2. Share information with school-based staff about the demonstration project
3. Participate in state and local implementation team meetings (e.g., conference calls, in-person, etc.)
4. Share information and feedback with DBH and KDE staff
5. Participate in evaluation of the demonstration project

"A standardized, comprehensive best-practice screening and assessment protocol, used by all systems to identify at-risk children and accurately assess their mental health and substance use/abuse needs, will ensure a consistent, appropriate approach across multiple systems that should result in better child and family outcomes."

- The Child Welfare League of America